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Guidelines for Integrated Reproduction Management (IRM)

A Problem-Solving Concept for Increasing Food Animal Reproductive Efficiency

These guidelines were developed by the Regional IRM Planning and Development Committees, June 22, 1983, St. Louis, Missouri.

Integrated Reproduction Management (IRM) is a problem-solving concept. It originated as a means of better using the total research, extension, and resident instruction capacity in the United States for solving complex food animal reproduction problems. Increased emphasis on the improvement of reproductive efficiency has wide support in both production and scientific communities. The IRM approach to the solution of problems facing the producer has gained wide support among all major food-animal commodity organizations.

For the concept to have increased merit when compared to existing programs, integration must occur across and among disciplines and colleges—extension with research, and agency with agency. Also, all planning and conduct of programs must be with the intimate involvement of the industry(s) being served.

For more than 2 years, an IRM Coordinating Panel has functioned at the national level; while, in each of the four State Extension Service and State Experiment Station regions, 6-member Regional IRM Planning and Development committees have worked with the states to lay the groundwork for an IRM program. Several states now are organized to meet planning needs. Meetings of the regional and national planning and coordinating groups resulted in the development of these guidelines. They are to be used to establish IRM projects and to serve as an aid in further planning and development at state, regional, and national levels.

The future of IRM is dependent on federal and state funding and the agreed-upon procedures for use of multi-source funds as they become available.

March 1984

Guidelines for Establishing an Integrated Reproduction Management (IRM) Program

Definition and Criteria

Integrated Reproduction Management (IRM) is a cooperative industry and land-grant university-USDA multidisciplinary approach to the identification and solution of problems that decrease the reproductive efficiency of food-producing animals. This attempt to solve specific reproductive problems is designed to more effectively combine the personnel and resources of land-grant universities, departments, and USDA agencies. The essential criteria for an IRM approach to problem-solving are:

- Documented evidence of industry input in establishing priorities, planning and implementing the project.
- A multidisciplined approach, using expertise from state and USDA research and extension organizations, and cooperation of other sources, as needed, for an effective solution to the problem.
- A time table related to the planned approach to the problem and evidence of the means to measure progress.
- Joint research-extension-industry plans for disseminating the information obtained and implementation of the technology developed.

Sequence for Organization and Planning

1. Organize your committee. The IRM structure, at the state level, is a multidisciplinary, interorganizational, planning and development committee with producer input at all levels. In establishing the committee, lines of communication with federal, state, local producer, research, and extension organizations must be developed. Members must be capable individuals interested in planning and organizing anticipated IRM efforts related to the state's needs. An industry representative should co-chair the committee with a representative of research or extension.

   Intrastate and multistate committees should be organized the same way.

2. Select a species reproduction problem and agree upon attainable objectives. This phase of planning and selection may be conducted at the local, state, multistate, regional, or national level, as dictated by the scope of the problem.

3. Clearly define and agree upon responsibilities of all participants as their function relates to elements of the project outline.

4. Provide a means for establishing benchmark data (present conditions) as indicated in Item X of the project outline.

5. Establish responsibility and procedure for immediate transfer and application of new technology developed.

6. To protect cooperating producers, a written contract of agreement is suggested. It should cover nuisance fees, disclaimers, liability insurance, and other provisions as needed.

7. Assist in securing funding for the initiation and completion of the project.

Species _____

I. Project number and title:

II. Location:

III. Abstract of proposal:

IV. Objectives:

V. Duration, including date of initiation:

VI. Justification for an IRM approach, including potential benefits to industry:

VII. Related ongoing research and/or extension at institution, if any, including personnel involved:

VIII. Project personnel, including discipline, location, and involving:
   A. Research: SAES and ARS
   B. Extension:
   C. Resident Instruction:
   D. Industry Representatives:

IX. Farms or ranches cooperating; include contact person:

X. Level of performance related to problem and objectives on participating farms or ranches, including a data base and its reliability:

XI. Experimental and/or demonstrational procedure, including:
   - responsibility of personnel
   - communication between cooperators
   - a time table.

XII. Role and responsibilities of cooperating procedures.

XIII. Needed contracts or agreements with cooperating producers.

XIV. Individuals responsible and the means for communication of results and conclusions:
   A. Types of and projected dates of publications:
      1. Scientific journal publications (authors):
      2. Extension publication (authors):
      3. Industry newsletter (authors):
   B. Industry applications:

XV. Budget:
   A. Annual and total, by agency or functioning unit:
   B. Budget justification:

XVI. Signatures of authorizing personnel; i.e., administrators, cooperators, etc.

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